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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

NOVEMBER 5, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Current Basic United States Policy  
Toward Cuba

There is enclosed, for your approval, a brief statement designed in the light of our present difficult relations with Cuba to serve as guidance to the Executive Departments and agencies concerned with the implementation of our policy in Cuba, and also to the American Ambassador in Habana.

The gist of the proposed policy guidance is that:

- 1) all actions and policies of the United States Government should be designed to encourage within Cuba and elsewhere in Latin America opposition to the extremist, anti-American course of the Castro regime, but that
- 2) in achieving this objective, the United States should avoid giving the impression of direct pressure or intervention against Castro, except where defense of legitimate United States interest is involved.

The Department bases this recommended policy on several conclusions, arrived at by close observation of the Castro regime for the past ten months. These conclusions are (a) that there is no reasonable basis to found our policy on a hope that Castro will voluntarily adopt policies and attitudes consistent with minimum United States security requirements and policy interests; (b) that the prolonged continuation of the Castro regime in Cuba in its present form would have serious adverse effects on the United States position in Latin America and corresponding advantages for international Communism; and (c) that only by the building up within Cuba of a coherent opposition consisting of elements desirous of achieving political and economic progress within a framework of good United States-Cuban relations can the Castro regime be checked or replaced.

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In arriving at these conclusions, the Department has in effect applied a series of tests to the Castro regime for the past ten months, meanwhile exercising just restraint in the face of provocations and giving Castro every opportunity to establish Cuban-United States relations on an acceptable basis. He has, instead, on important occasions elected a course inimical to the United States and its interests. Specifically, his deliberate fomenting of anti-American sentiment in Cuba and seeking to do so in other Latin American countries now represents, beyond doubt, the basic policy and orientation of his government. He has veered towards a "neutralist" anti-American foreign policy for Cuba which, if emulated by other Latin American countries, would have serious adverse effects on Free World support of our leadership, especially in the United Nations on such issues as the Chinese representation problem. He has, in fact, given support to Caribbean revolutionary movements designed to bring into power governments modeled on or responsive to his government and by such interventionist activities sought to undermine the Inter-American system. He has tolerated and encouraged the infiltration of Communists and their sympathizers into important positions in key governmental institutions, the armed forces, and organized labor while, dating back to the meeting of Latin American Communist leaders in Moscow last January, the international Communist apparatus has made clear that it sees in the advance of Castroism the best chance of achieving its immediate objectives. On the economic side, Castro's policies have been drastic and tended increasingly towards statal control of the economic life of Cuba. Not only have our business interests in Cuba been seriously affected, but the United States cannot hope to encourage and support sound economic policies in other Latin American countries and promote necessary private investment in Latin America if it is or appears to be simultaneously cooperating in the Castro program.

In view of the special sensitivity of Latin America to United States "intervention", I would propose that the existence and substance of this current policy statement be held on a very strict "need-to-know" basis.

*Christian A. Herter*

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Enclosure:

Policy Statement.

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